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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 009333

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SUBJECT: AMM TO STAY IN ACEH THROUGH ELECTIONS (NOVEMBER 22)

Classified By: Acting DCM William Frej, for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Aceh Monitoring Mission chief Peter Feith told the Ambassador in Aceh that the AMM had decided to extend its presence in Aceh through the new elections on November 22, a date which has not yet been announced publicly. The Ambassador, accompanied by USAID Mission Director Frej and U.S. Consul General Stein on a visit to Banda Aceh on July 22, discussed election candidates, the mobilizing of assistance to ensure free and fair elections, and whether the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) would be able to transform itself into a political force capable of contesting elections and governing in a peaceful Aceh. Citing a recent TNI shooting incident that is under investigation, Feith underscored the need to limit the role of the Indonesian military (TNI) in post-election Aceh while strengthening the police as guardians of civil order. Feith and AMM interlocutors expressed surprise but also satisfaction at the high degree of apparent public acceptance so far of the Law on the Administration of Aceh, passed by the Indonesian National Parliament on July 11 and now awaiting President Yudhoyono's signature. Noting that GAM has yet to take an official position on the law, Feith said the GAM should resolve its outstanding concerns about the law and support it strongly. End summary.

¶2. (U) Ambassador Pascoe visited Banda Aceh on July 22 to review USAID programs and meet with key figures in Aceh's tsunami reconstruction and the implementation of the GOI's

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peace accords with the Free Aceh Movement (GAM). The Ambassador was accompanied by USAID Mission Director William Frej and newly-arrived Medan Consul General Sean Stein.

¶3. (C) At a meeting with Aceh Monitoring Mission head Peter Feith and two senior AMM political analysts, the Ambassador was told the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the GAM was "going well." Feith described the AMM as a victim of its own success in agreeing to yet another extension. Because all parties in the peace negotiations perceived AMM as an effective, impartial observer, Feith explained, both President Yudhoyono and GAM's senior leadership had asked AMM to remain in Aceh through the scheduled (though not yet announced) elections on November 22.

¶4. (C) On the question of supporting the local election authorities to ensure a free and fair election, Feith said the EU had a significant election support program through UNDP and would send a delegation of election observers. Frej said USAID planned to support the election process through traditional implementing partners IFES, NDI and IRI.

¶5. (C) On the role of the GAM in the local elections and its evolving role in Aceh politics, Feith noted that, among the

seven pairs of candidates for governor and deputy governor, only one candidate had selected a GAM running mate. Feith said GAM had divided into two groups: the "old guard" including Malik Mahmud, who for decades had articulated GAM's political aspirations from exile abroad, and the "young commanders" including Irwandy Yusuf, who wanted GAM to become an effective participant in local politics and, eventually, a group capable of governing. In short, Feith said, the GAM had to decide whether it wanted to be dogmatic or pragmatic.

¶6. (C) As a step toward learning to govern, meeting participants agreed, GAM must first define positions on practical issues ranging from provision of government services to outlining a concrete vision for Aceh's future. One AMM analyst in the meeting noted that GAM members had expressed a desire for Aceh to be run "like Singapore," but had done little to develop an actual plan to achieve that goal. Participants generally agreed that if GAM was unable to make the transition to a political party with the capacity to govern, it might well disappear as Aceh became integrated into mainstream Indonesian politics.

¶7. (C) When asked what factors might complicate the further implementation of the peace accords, Peter Feith and the Ambassador expressed concerns about the role of the Indonesian National Army (TNI). The extent of TNI deployment in the province following the recent adoption of the Law on Governing Aceh (LOGA) has yet to be determined. Feith pointed to a July 3 incident in Lokseumawe, in which TNI soldiers allegedly fired into a crowd of civilians (killing one), as an example of the ongoing need to define and possibly limit TNI presence in the province and of the need to strengthen the capacity of the police to provide for public safety.

¶8. (C) Overall, participants expressed surprise but also

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satisfaction at the relative acceptance with which the LOGA had been greeted in Aceh. Although most Acehnese did not regard the LOGA as perfect, it did provide a substantial degree of authority to the next elected government including: shared management of the province's significant oil and gas resources; permission to register local political parties; permission to register candidates for office independently of party affiliation; and the right of the elected governor to appoint the provincial chief of police and chief prosecutor. Participants agreed it would be in GAM's best interest to resolve its outstanding concerns about the law and then support it strongly. By electing its members to office, the GAM could ensure its continued organizational viability and ability to exercise political influence through the significant power the LOGA offered.

¶9. (C) Participants agreed that widespread acceptance of the LOGA was essential to the successful conclusion of the peace process. Feith urged USG support in familiarizing the Acehnese population with the provisions of the law, and the Ambassador said that support would be forthcoming once all sides had expressed unequivocal support for the law's implementation.

¶10. (C) AMM participants said it was too early to predict the next governor. Chief Operating Officer Eddy Purwanto of the Agency for Reconstruction and Rehabilitation (BRR), however, said public support for former Acting Governor Azwar Abubakar appeared to be fading, although Abubakar had the largest financial resources of all the candidates. Public sentiment, according to Purwanto, was building for Human Hamid. Interlocutors throughout the day stressed that the candidates had not yet registered officially and the race had yet to begin in earnest.

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